

PORTRAIT OF AN AMERICAN CITY
WAYNE HYDE

OCTOBER 17, 1978
SERIES 7 NO. 1

OKLAHOMA CITY: "BORN GROWN"
(INSERTS IN TAPE LIBRARY)

TAPE: CUT ONE -- MUSIC "OKLAHOMA" - UP FULL 30 SEC. & HOLD UNDER

NARR: THE MUSIC IS TITLED "OKLAHOMA", AND COMES FROM ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL BROADWAY MUSICALS OF ALL TIME. THE SHOW WAS A TRIBUTE TO THE SOUTHWESTERN STATE OF OKLAHOMA, AND THIS TITLE SONG HAS BEEN DESIGNATED BY AN ACT OF LEGISLATURE AS THE OFFICIAL SONG OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA.

TAPE: UP FULL FOR EMPHASIS BRIEFLY AND FADE OUT UNDER (TOTAL CUT: 2:29)

NARR: BACK IN THE SPRING OF THE YEAR 1889 THERE WAS NO SUCH PLACE AS OKLAHOMA CITY. BUT THE CITY ITSELF SPRANG FROM THE PRAIRIES IN JUST ONE AFTERNOON. IT'S ONE OF THE MOST UNUSUAL STORIES IN AMERICAN HISTORY.

TAPE: CUT TWO -- STEWART

"IN NO OTHER PLACE IN NO OTHER TIME HAS THIS EVER HAPPENED. AND IT CAN'T EVER HAPPEN AGAIN, FOR THE SIMPLE REASON THAT THE CONDITIONS THAT MADE THIS PARTICULAR THING POSSIBLE DO NOT EXIST ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD."

NARR: ROY STEWART, JOURNALIST, AUTHOR, AND PERHAPS THE BEST QUALIFIED CITIZEN OF OKLAHOMA CITY TO TALK ABOUT ITS HISTORY, BECAUSE HE WROTE A PRIZE-WINNING BOOK ABOUT IT, WHICH WON THE WESTERN HERITAGE AWARD IN 1974. THE BOOK IS TITLED "BORN GROWN" -- AND THAT'S THE WAY OKLAHOMA CITY STARTED. IT WAS, TRULY, BORN GROWN.

TAPE: CUT THREE -- STEWART

"AFTER MUCH AGITATION IN CONGRESS -- DIFFERENT WAYS, DIFFERENT MEANS, MANY PROPOSALS ABOUT WHAT THEY SHOULD DO WITH ALL THIS COUNTRY (THE OKLAHOMA TERRITORY), AT LAST THERE WAS A PROCLAMATION MADE THAT ON APRIL TWENTY-

TAPE: TWO, 1889, THESE LANDS HERE -- THE ONE-POINT-EIGHT MILLION
(CONT'D) ACRES IN CENTRAL OKLAHOMA -- WOULD BE OPENED TO SETTLEMENT.
AND THAT MEANT THAT AT NOON THAT DAY -- HIGH NOON --
THERE WOULD BE A SHOT FIRED. THERE WOULD BE BUGLES BLOWN;
THERE WOULD BE GUIDONS (FLAGS) DROPPED (QUICKLY LOWERED)
BY UNITED STATES (ARMY) CAVALRY THAT WAS HERE."

NARR: AND THAT'S EXACTLY THE WAY IT HAPPENED. THE RIFLE SHOT
WAS FIRED, THE CAVALRY BUGLES BLEW, THE FLAGS DIPPED IN
THE SIGNAL THAT THE RUN -- THE GREAT OKLAHOMA LAND RUSH --
WAS ON. AND NEVER BEFORE OR SINCE THEN HAS SUCH A LAND
RUSH OCCURRED ANYWHERE ON EARTH.

IT WAS INCREDIBLE. FROM THE RESTRAINING LINES, THE PEOPLE
RUSHED FORWARD -- SOME ON HORSEBACK, SOME IN WAGONS OR
CARRIAGES, SOME ON FOOT. ALL OF THEM TRYING TO GET SOME LAND,
TO CLAIM IT FOR THEMSELVES. IT MIGHT BE ONLY A SMALL PLOT
OF GROUND OR IT MIGHT BE A FORTY-HECTARE AREA WHERE THEY MIGHT
ONE DAY BUILD A FARM. THE THING WAS TO GET THERE AS FAST AS
POSSIBLE, PLANT THE WOODEN STAKES INTO THE GROUND THAT MARKED
OFF YOUR OWN TERRITORY -- AND THEN TRY TO HOLD IT AGAINST
OPPOSITION AND OTHER PEOPLE TRYING TO CLAIM THE SAME AREA.
AGAIN, HISTORIAN ROY STEWART.

TAPE: CUT FOUR -- STEWART

"AT HIGH NOON THEY STARTED THE RUN, AND BY EVENING THERE
WERE MORE THAN TEN THOUSAND PEOPLE HERE. AND THAT IS
WHY WE SAY THAT OKLAHOMA CITY WAS BORN GROWN. IN ONE
AFTERNOON. IT STARTED FROM NOTHING EXCEPT A FEW PEOPLE
IN HERE LEGALLY -- EMPLOYEES OF THE SANTA FE RAILROAD AND
SOME GOVERNMENT SUTLERS (MERCHANTS WHO SOLD GOODS TO THE
U.S. ARMY) AND FREIGHTERS. THEY WERE THE ONLY LEGAL
RESIDENTS HERE."

NARR: THERE WERE SOME ILLEGAL PEOPLE, HOWEVER. THEY HAD SNEAKED
IN EARLIER TO STAKE THEIR CLAIMS. THEY WERE CALLED
"SOONERS" -- A NOT VERY COMPLIMENTARY TERM IN THOSE DAYS,

NARR: BECAUSE IT MEANT THEY GOT THERE "SOONER" THAN THE ONES
(CONT'D) THAT CAME IN LEGALLY. BUT THE CONNOTATION HAS MELLOWED
WITH AGE, AND TODAY OKLAHOMA IS ACTUALLY KNOWN AS "THE
SOONER STATE".

BUT THERE WAS NO ORGANIZATION IN THE LAND RUSH; THERE
WERE NO REGULATIONS, NO PLANNING. THEY JUST OPENED THE
LAND AND SAID, IN EFFECT, "COME AND GET IT," MISTER
STEWART PICKS UP THE STORY AGAIN.

TAPE: CUT FIVE -- STEWART

"BUT TO THE EVERLASTING BENEFIT OF THE PEOPLE HERE, THEY
HAD A MEETING THAT EVENING -- A MASS MEETING -- THE EVENING
OF THE OPENING. AND THEY ORGANIZED A PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT.
THEY SET OUT SOME ORDINANCES, SOME LAWS OF BEHAVIOR AND
WHAT NOT, AND EVERYBODY VOTED. THE PEOPLE STANDING THERE
VOTED, AND THEY ELECTED SOME PROVISIONAL OFFICERS -- A MAYOR,
A CHIEF OF POLICE AND WHATEVER. AND FOR THIRTEEN MONTHS,
THAT WAS THE ONLY LAW, THE ONLY ORGANIZED CITY GOVERNMENT
THAT THEY HAD HERE. AND IT WAS SET UP BY THE PEOPLE
THEMSELVES. AND THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES OBEYED IT."

NARR: THERE WERE DISPUTES OVER THE LAND PEOPLE HAD CLAIMED, SOME
PEOPLE CLAIMING THE SAME LAND. SO A COMMITTEE WAS ORGANIZED
ESPECIALLY TO SETTLE THESE DISPUTES. AGAIN, THE COMMITTEE'S
JUDGEMENT WAS ACCEPTED. DESPITE THE COMPLETELY DISORGANIZED
WAY THINGS HAD BEGUN, THE NEW OKLAHOMA TERRITORY SETTLERS
REALIZED THAT THINGS WERE WORKING NOW, AND THAT THIS WAS
THE ESSENCE OF DEMOCRACY. ALL OF THIS GOT UNDERWAY WITHIN
A SIX-HOUR PERIOD -- FROM NOON UNTIL SIX O'CLOCK THAT
EVENING OF APRIL 22, 1889.

THE FIRST-DAY TENTS GAVE WAY TO WOODEN STRUCTURES AND
PLANNED STREETS, BUT ONLY THE RESIDENTS THERE CALLED IT
OKLAHOMA CITY. UNTIL 1923, THE UNITED STATES POST OFFICE

NARR: CALLED IT SIMPLY "OKLAHOMA, OKLAHOMA." THE WOODEN
(CONT'D) STRUCTURES WERE REPLACED IN TIME BY BRICK, STONE AND STEEL.
STREETS WERE WIDENED, TREES WERE PLANTED IN THE DOWNTOWN
AREA. THE CITY WAS GROWING FAST, AND TODAY ITS AREA IS
AMONG THIS COUNTRY'S LARGEST -- SOME ONE THOUSAND THIRTY-FIVE
SQUARE KILOMETERS. SO THERE IS PLENTY OF ROOM FOR
OKLAHOMA CITY'S POPULATION OF MORE THAN 368-THOUSAND. THE
STATE'S CAPITAL CITY ALSO IS THE HOME OF TINKER AIR FORCE
BASE, ONE OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST AIR DEPOTS, WHICH EMPLOYS
22-THOUSAND CIVILIANS AND TWO THOUSAND, FIVE HUNDRED MILITARY
PEOPLE. AVIATION IS BIG BUSINESS IN THE AREA, AS IS
AGRICULTURE AND RANCHING. BUT, STRANGELY ENOUGH, DESPITE
THE VISUAL ASPECT OF AN ULTRA-MODERN CITY, OKLAHOMA CITY
STILL HAS A FEELING ABOUT IT OF "OLD WEST". ROBERT
THOMPSON, DIRECTOR OF CONVENTIONS AND TOURISM IN THE CITY,
PUTS IT THIS WAY.

TAPE: CUT SIX -- THOMPSON

"ONE OF THE BIGGEST ATTRACTIONS TO ME IS THE FACT THAT THERE'S
A CERTAIN VESTIGE OF THE FRONTIER THAT YOU CAN STILL SORT OF
PUT YOUR HANDS ON HERE. THERE'S STILL THAT PIONEER FEELING
IN THIS COMMUNITY. YET THIS ENTIRE DOWNTOWN AREA IS BEING
REBUILT -- IN LESS THAN NINETY YEARS -- FROM THE TIME IT WAS
A PRAIRIE OF GRASS. SO, YOU KNOW, THERE'S A FEELING IN
OKLAHOMA CITY THAT PEOPLE IN THIS TOWN ARE CAPABLE OF DOING
WHAT THEY FEEL THEY'RE BIG ENOUGH TO DO."

NARR: OKLAHOMA CITY HAS BEEN CALLED "THE MYRIAD CITY" BECAUSE IT
HAS ALL THE ELEMENTS WHICH MAKE UP A MAJOR METROPOLITAN
COMPLEX, AND BECAUSE EACH OF THESE ELEMENTS IN TURN HAS
A MYRIAD OF CHOICE -- WHETHER IT BE THE ARTS, INDUSTRY, OR
THOSE AMENITIES WHICH MAKE FOR A BETTER LIFE.

NARR: (CONT'D) AND SPEAKING OF INDUSTRY, THE MAJOR ONE IN THIS AREA IS OIL. AS A MATTER OF FACT, ONCE THE UNOFFICIAL NAME OF THE PLACE WAS "OIL TOWN". THERE ARE ABOUT ONE THOUSAND, EIGHT-HUNDRED PRODUCING OIL WELLS IN THE OKLAHOMA CITY METROPOLITAN AREA. THE OIL INDUSTRY EMPLOYS UPWARDS OF THIRTY THOUSAND PERSONS IN THE CITY -- AND OKLAHOMA CITY, ACCORDING TO ITS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, HAS THE SECOND LOWEST RATE OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE UNITED STATES TODAY. IT'S THREE-POINT-FOUR PERCENT, CONSIDERABLY BELOW THE NATIONAL AVERAGE.

NOW LET'S GET BACK TO THOSE 1,800 OIL WELLS. ONE OF THE MAJOR ATTRACTIONS FOR VISITORS TO THE CITY IS THE STATE CAPITOL BUILDING. IN 1928, OIL WAS DISCOVERED ON THE VERY LOCATION WHERE THE CAPITOL BUILDING HAD BEEN BUILT.

TAPE: CUT SEVEN -- BIRDWELL

"AS A MATTER OF FACT, THE OIL COMPANIES THAT WERE EXPLORING THE OKLAHOMA CITY OIL FIELD FELT THAT THE (OIL) RESERVES IN THE STATE CAPITOL AREA WERE SO VALUABLE AND VITAL THAT THEY GOT SPECIAL AUTHORIZATION TO DRILL OIL WELLS ON SLANT DRILLING UNDERNEATH THE STATE CAPITOL, AND THERE ARE WORKING OIL WELLS ALL AROUND THE STATE CAPITOL GROUNDS NOW, AND THEY ARE THE MOST VISITED ATTRACTIONS IN OKLAHOMA CITY."

NARR: HARRY BIRDWELL OF THE OKLAHOMA CITY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE. MOST OIL WELLS ARE DRILLED VERTICALLY. SLANT DRILLING MEANS THE DRILL BITS WENT INTO THE GROUND AT AN ANGLE -- SO THEY COULD GET UNDER THE CAPITOL BUILDING. AND THEY FOUND OIL UNDER THERE. MISTER BIRDWELL AGAIN.

TAPE: CUT EIGHT -- BIRDWELL

"THERE ARE TWO PRODUCING WELLS THAT PRODUCE OIL FROM DIRECTLY BENEATH THE CAPITOL BUILDING ITSELF. AND ON THE CAPITOL GROUNDS, WHICH IS AN AREA OF SEVERAL ACRES, THERE ARE ABOUT TWENTY WORKING OIL WELLS WITH THE DERRICKS STILL

TAPE: IN PLACE. SO THAT PHOTOGRAPHERS AND TOURISTS TO OUR CITY
(CONT'D) CAN SEE WHAT THE PRODUCING RIGS LOOK LIKE. AND THEY'RE A
VERY POPULAR ATTRACTION."

NARR: YOU CAN EVEN SEE THE OIL DERRICKS IN THE BACK YARDS AND
FRONT YARDS AND SIDE YARDS OF INDIVIDUAL HOUSES, IN SCHOOL
YARDS, AND ALONG THE HIGHWAYS AND COUNTRY ROADS. AND IT'S
TRUE -- THEY ARE A POPULAR ATTRACTION.

THERE IS MUCH ABOUT THE SO-CALLED MYRIAD CITY THAT IS
ATTRACTIVE. FOR ONE THING, IT'S A VERY CLEAN CITY, AND IN
THE DOWNTOWN AREA THERE IS A SURPRISING LACK OF TRAFFIC.
THERE ARE VERY FEW PEDESTRIANS ON THE DOWNTOWN STREETS, TOO.

PEOPLE SAY THAT DURING THE HOT SUMMER DAYS, AND THE COLD
WINTER DAYS, OKLAHOMA CITY GOES UNDERGROUND. IT MEANS
THAT IN THE CITY'S CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT, ALMOST EVERYONE
USES THE METRO CONCOURSE, AN UNDERGROUND PEDESTRIAN NETWORK
CONNECTING OFFICE BUILDINGS AND HUGE PARKING FACILITIES
UNDER AN AREA OF ABOUT SIX SQUARE CITY BLOCKS. THE METRO
CONCOURSE IS ARTFULLY LIGHTED AND DECORATED. SHOPS,
BOUTIQUES, RESTAURANTS OF EVERY KIND LINE ITS CORRIDORS.

OKLAHOMA CITY CITIZENS SAY THAT WHAT THE CITY HAS HAD GOING
FOR IT THROUGH ITS EIGHTY-NINE YEARS HAS BEEN HUMAN POWER.
THE SAME ENERGY AND DRIVE AND VITALITY THAT SPRUNG THE CITY
FROM A GRASS PRAIRIE IN SIX HOURS ON AN APRIL DAY IN 1889
IS VERY MUCH IN EVIDENCE TODAY.

BUT TRAVEL OUT TO PERSIMMON HILL, PERHAPS TEN KILOMETERS
FROM THE ULTRA-MODERN DOWNTOWN AREA, AND YOU ARE BACK IN
TIME ONE HUNDRED YEARS. ON THE HILL OVERLOOKING A PART OF

NARR: THE OLD CHISOLM TRAIL STANDS THE NATIONAL COWBOY HALL OF
(CONT'D) FAME AND WESTERN HERITAGE CENTER, OPENED IN 1965.

THE DESIGN OF THE BUILDING SUGGESTS A PIONEER CAMP, OR
PERHAPS A CIRCLE OF WAGONS AROUND A CAMPFIRE. SEEN AT NIGHT,
WITH THE TENT-LIKE ROOFS SILHOUETTED AGAINST A MOONLIT SKY,
LIGHTS GLOW FROM WITHIN LIKE A CAMPFIRE, AND ONE CAN ALMOST
HEAR THE SOUNDS OF DAYS PAST. HERE, ONE MEETS THE OLD WEST
IN THIS WORLD'S LARGEST MUSEUM OF WESTERN HERITAGE AND ART.
IT WAS THE IDEA OF A BUSINESSMAN NAMED CHESTER REYNOLDS.

TAPE: CUT NINE -- MUNO

"HIS IDEA CAME FROM VISITING THE WILL ROGERS MUSEUM IN
CLAREMORE, OKLAHOMA. AND HE THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD BE NICE
TO HAVE A MUSEUM THAT DEDICATED ITSELF TO NOT JUST ONE
PERSON BUT (TO) MANY PIONEERS -- THE PEOPLE WHO HAD PLAYED
A PART IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WEST."

NARR: RICH MUNO, CULTURAL DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL COWBOY HALL
OF FAME. MISTER REYNOLDS GOT HIS IDEA IN 1954, AND MANAGED
TO INTEREST THE GOVERNORS OF SEVENTEEN WESTERN STATES IN
THE PROJECT. PERSIMMON HILL WAS CHOSEN AS THE SITE OF THE
MUSEUM BY A COMMITTEE OF MEMBERS FROM THESE STATES, AND
TODAY THE BUILDING COVERS MORE THAN 24-THOUSAND SQUARE METERS
NEW COLLECTIONS ARE CONSTANTLY BEING ADDED TO THE GALLERY,
AND ITS WESTERN ART COLLECTION IS VALUED AT MORE THAN 12
MILLION DOLLARS. RICH MUNO AGAIN.

TAPE: CUT TEN -- MUNO

"OF COURSE WHEN WE FIRST OPENED, WE DIDN'T HAVE ANYTHING.
EVERYTHING WAS BORROWED. BUT WE NEEDED A COLLECTION HERE
OF (CHARLIE) RUSSELL AND (FREDERIC) REMINGTON (FAMOUS
WESTERN PAINTERS AND SCULPTORS). AND THERE WAS AN OIL
MAN OUT IN CALIFORNIA -- CHARLIE S. JONES -- HAD A LARGE
COLLECTION OF RUSSELL MATERIAL. PAINTINGS, WATERCOLORS --
A MAJORITY OF IT WAS BRONZES. AND THAT BECAME THE NUCLEUS
OF OUR COLLECTION, THE RUSSELL COLLECTION WE GOT THERE."

NARR: AFTER THE RUSSELL COLLECTION, SAYS RICH MUNO, THE PAINTINGS BEGAN TO COME IN ABOUT ONE OR TWO AT A TIME. USUALLY, THESE WERE PAINTINGS THAT CAME UP FOR SALE -- AND THE MUSEUM WOULD TRY TO TALK SOMEONE INTO BUYING THEM -- AND THEN GIVING THEM TO THE HALL OF FAME. THE HALL, IN KEEPING WITH THE INDEPENDENT SPIRIT OF THE OLD WEST, USES NO CITY, COUNTY, STATE OR FEDERAL FUNDS. REVENUES COME LARGELY FROM THE MUSEUM'S ADMISSION CHARGE -- TWO DOLLARS FOR ADULTS, ONE DOLLAR FOR CHILDREN.

O
P
T
ONE OF THE BIG ATTRACTIONS AT THE COWBOY HALL OF FAME IS THE RODEO HALL OF FAME. THERE ARE PHOTOS AND PAINTINGS OF THE "ALL-ROUND CHAMPION COWBOY" -- A PRESTIGIOUS AWARD GIVEN EACH YEAR TO ONE RODEO COWBOY. THE INDIVIDUAL CHAMPIONS DONATE EVERYTHING FROM TROPHY SADDLES -- SOME OF WHICH HAVE NEVER BEEN USED -- TO LARIATS, TO HATS, BOOTS, SPURS.

IN THE GARDENS OF THE HALL OF FAME ARE BURIED THE GREAT RODEO BUCKING HORSES, "MIDNIGHT" -- WHO THREW EVERY COWBOY THAT TRIED TO RIDE HIM -- AND ANOTHER GREAT HORSE CALLED "FIVE MINUTES TO MIDNIGHT."

SINCE COWBOYS HAVE BEEN AND ALWAYS WILL BE OF INTEREST TO ALMOST EVERYONE, PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD COME TO VISIT THE NATIONAL COWBOY HALL OF FAME.

TAPE: CUT ELEVEN -- MUNO

"WE GET NOW AN AVERAGE OF THREE HUNDRED AND FIFTY THOUSAND PEOPLE A YEAR. BY THE WAY, JUST YESTERDAY, WE HAD OUR FOUR MILLIONTH VISITOR HERE, AND THAT WAS QUITE A MILESTONE FOR US. IT WAS A COUPLE AND THEIR TWO CHILDREN FROM ARKANSAS."

NARR: OF COURSE, THEY WERE ADMITTED FREE OF CHARGE -- AND THEN PRESENTED WITH GIFTS. A CERTIFICATE, A LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP IN THE NATIONAL COWBOY HALL OF FAME, WESTERN CLOTHING, A REPLICA OF THE FAMOUS STATUE CALLED "END OF THE TRAIL" -- THE ORIGINAL OF WHICH IS IN THE HALL OF FAME -- PAIRS OF COWBOY BOOTS -- AND ONE MORE GIFT.

TAPE: CUT TWELVE -- MUNO

"ONE THING THAT THEY REALLY DID LIKE, MORE THAN THE CERTIFICATES OR ANYTHING, WAS AN AUTOGRAPHED PORTRAIT OF (MOTION PICTURE STAR) JOHN WAYNE CONGRATULATING THEM AS THE FOUR MILLIONTH VISITOR."

NARR: THIS HAS BEEN ONLY A SMALL PART OF THE STORY OF THE NATIONAL COWBOY HALL OF FAME -- AND OF THE CLEAN AND BEAUTIFUL METROPOLIS THEY CALL THE MYRIAD CITY -- OKLAHOMA CITY. IT'S BEGINNING WAS A UNIQUE CHAPTER IN AMERICAN HISTORY, BECAUSE IT IS TRULY A CITY THAT WAS "BORN GROWN".

TAPE: CUT THIRTEEN - MUSIC - "OKLAHOMA" - UP FULL 30 SEC. & HOLD UNDER

ANNCR: YOU HAVE BEEN LISTENING TO "OKLAHOMA CITY: BORN GROWN", ONE MORE IN THE VOICE OF AMERICA'S "PORTRAIT OF AN AMERICAN CITY" SERIES. THIS PROGRAM WAS WRITTEN AND PRODUCED BY WAYNE HYDE. YOUR NARRATOR WAS-----.

TAPE: UP FULL AS NEEDED - TOTAL CUT 2:29

#

RK/RD/RCS